NOAA Coastal Services Center
Training Policy

Introduction

The mission of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Coastal Services Center is to support the environmental, social, and economic well being of the coast by linking people, information, and technology. In keeping with this mission, our training courses focus on building the capacity of organizations involved in managing and protecting coastal resources. Other providers—academic, private, and commercial—offer training in areas of interest to our customer base. The Center does not duplicate these efforts. Rather, we work to fill gaps in available training, developing materials within the specific context of coastal management using relevant coastal content and examples. Our courses focus on selected topics and offer hands-on experience applying relevant methods and techniques to specific coastal management issues.

Participants

o   The target audience for all Center products and services does not include the public, but rather focuses on the coastal resource management community. Within this community, the target audience depends on the content of the individual course. The primary audience represents:

   o   State- and local-level coastal managers
   o   NOAA and other federal agencies' field-based coastal managers
   o   Nongovernmental organizations involved with coastal management
   o   International project partners

   The primary audience includes:

   o   Science and technology professionals
   o   Education, outreach, and extension professionals
   o   Planners and community development and hazard specialists
   o   Enforcement, compliance, and permitting specialists
   o   Local, state, and national coastal park managers
   o   Emergency managers

o   The Center strives to reach as many coastal management professionals as possible. To this end, all courses in the categories of coastal management and in building process skills are available to be taught off-site at the request of a local host. Some geospatial technology courses may also be taught at remote sites.

Quality Assurance

o   Development of any Center training material requires a content development team in consultation with instructional design expertise. All courses are tested with an internal audience and then "piloted" with an external audience to assess effectiveness. Technical editing and format design of course materials follow the procedures set forth by the Center's communications program.

- o Extensive performance monitoring occurs for both the training content and course delivery. This process occurs throughout the life cycle of a course. A needs assessment is conducted before the preparation of any course content. Students complete evaluations after each class to provide the Center with valuable suggestions for improvements. The Center also sends out follow-up evaluations to students to determine if the training has met its long-term goals.

Instructors

Instructors for specific classes are selected for their experience and expertise in the subject matter and have experience in teaching and public speaking. They also have experience applying their expertise to coastal resource management issues. On occasion the Center will hire select outside instructors to deliver training material. For ESRI (Environmental Systems Research Institute) courses, the instructor must be authorized by ESRI and be in good standing with the ESRI Authorized Training Program.

Content

The Center offers training in three distinct areas: geospatial technology, coastal issues, and process skills (see Center website for course details). Delivery methods include instructor-led or -facilitated courses held at the Center, at local host sites, and at conferences and meetings. In addition, several Internet-based courses are offered.

The Center bases the development of new course materials on an identified need present in the coastal resource management community. New needs may be identified from the Center's triennial survey of the coastal community or other sources of information. If there are a large number of requests are received for training on a particular topic (e.g., new technology), the Center then undertakes a study to determine if there is an existing source of training available, either elsewhere in the coastal management community or in the private sector. If no other sources of training exist to meet the expressed need, the Center then may create course content to meet the need if the resources are available.

Frequency

A limited number of courses are scheduled each year at the Center. Coastal resource management agencies may request that the Center provide training at a site closer to their offices, but all requests will only be considered if the resources and trainers are available. In addition, requests for local training should be made at least two months in advance for coastal management training and process skills courses. Requests will be considered on a first-come, first-served basis. Requests for geospatial technology courses at local sites need to be made four to six months in advance to be considered. Those coastal entities interested in serving as a local host should contact the Center by e-mail at nos.csc.cls_trainers@noaa.gov.

Contact information for any courses held at the Center is listed on the Center's training webpage: www.csc.noaa.gov/training/. Registration for courses held at remote sites is handled by the local host (see next section for more information on remote training).

Remote Training Requirements

The Center will bring these courses to a community or region at the request of a local-host resource management agency. The local host agrees to provide all the logistics (see host responsibilities below) and guarantees that there will be **a minimum of 25** coastal resource management participants for non-computer-dependent training workshops (coastal management training and process skills courses) and a **minimum of 12** coastal resource management participants for computer-dependent courses (geospatial technology courses). The Center will provide trainers (and usually pay for travel costs), the training materials, audio-visual presentations, and some workshop supplies. The Center will also provide a draft agenda and work with the local host if the agenda needs to be modified. To schedule a workshop, you will need to contact the Center and request a specific course and dates, and have those dates confirmed, before making any other arrangements.

Host Responsibilities

- o Reserve and pay for all costs for the facilities necessary for the successful completion of training (sufficient size, appropriate lighting, tables and seating for participants and trainers, and accessible electrical outlets), including accommodations for special needs participants if required. The local host should ensure that if the class minimum is not met (see above), the use of the facility could be cancelled without penalty. **Also, see further site requirements for computer-dependent geospatial technology courses below.**

- o Create and send out invitations to potential participants and handle the registration process. The local host should invite its project partners, including stakeholders, who might benefit from the training. The Center will work with the local host to invite other appropriate coastal resource management entities in the region (e.g., National Estuarine Research Reserves, Sea Grant, Coastal Zone Management programs, and NOAA Sanctuary or Fisheries offices) if space is available. Student registration must be finalized two to four (certain geospatial courses) weeks before the start date of the course.

- o Greet the students on the morning of the first day of class and provide them with a name badge and course materials. Orient the students to the site and make them aware of emergency procedures, restroom locations, and any security procedures they should follow while in training. A brief time for the local host to present this information will be the first item on the course agenda.

- o Because of the interactive nature of the classes, including small group work and discussion, registration is limited to 35 students (or to space available in computer labs for geospatial training) involved in the field of coastal management.

- Provide the trainers with hotel recommendations and obtain a block of hotel rooms for participants, if appropriate.

- Arrange for break and lunch refreshments (you may cater lunch on-site or have people go out on their own for the hour, if there are nearby eateries). If host does not have a budget for this, the host can charge participants a registration fee to cover any incurred expenses.

- Provide an LCD projector, overhead projector, screen, and Post-It easel pads.

- Coordinate with the trainers to provide any other necessary audio-visual equipment and training supplies.

Additional Site Requirements for Computer-Dependent (Geospatial) Courses*

- Provide a computer lab with technical support and a minimum of 12 student computers and 1 instructor computer that meet the following minimum requirements:
  - 1.6 gigahertz Intel Core Duo, Pentium, or Xeon processor
  - 1 gigabyte of RAM
  - Windows 2000 or higher
  - 1.2 gigabyte hard drive
  - Instructor computer must have Microsoft PowerPoint installed
  - Internet access

- Provide the lab with a projector and screen for PowerPoint presentations.

- ArcGIS software is not mandatory, but instructors must be able to load Center-provided software on each lab computer. If the lab has ArcGIS, the version must match the version being used by the instructors to teach the course (currently 9.2).

* In addition, the Center will provide the following for geospatial technology courses:
  - Trainers (ESRI-authorized for ArcGIS courses) to teach each class
  - Manuals for students for each class
  - A flyer that describes the course and can be used for advertising purposes
  - Any necessary software including temporary licenses of ArcGIS for the duration of a course for any training lab that does not have access to the software. The day before the start of class, Center instructors will install the software and all data needed for course exercises. At the end of class, the instructors will uninstall the data and software and make every attempt to delete all files put on the computer during the class.

For more information, and a list of currently offered courses, visit the Center's training webpage: www.csc.noaa.gov/training/